

**Deerfield, IL** - Responding to the decision announced today by Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham that Yucca Mountain in Nevada become the permanent storage site for our nation's nuclear waste, U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Highland Park) said:

*"We are one step closer to being nuclear waste free in the Tenth Congressional District. Northern Illinois is home to over 1,000 tons of highly-radioactive, spent nuclear fuel stored just 100 yards from Lake Michigan. The environmental future of Lake Michigan depends on removing nuclear waste from its shoreline. The Great Lakes are home to over 30 nuclear waste storage sites. The health and safety of over 90 million Americans depends on protecting the Great Lakes' habitat. One of my first acts as a Member of Congress was to tour the Yucca Mountain site. While no site is perfect, this is one of the driest, most isolated places in America, where hundreds of nuclear weapons have already been tested. Later this month, I will be co-chairing a new caucus in the House of Representatives. The Nuclear Fuel Safety Caucus will support the safe transportation and storage of spent nuclear fuel away from population centers and critical environmental habitats. I applaud the decision of Secretary Abraham and look forward to building bi-partisan support in Congress for removing radioactive fuel from Illinois."*